

**Report to the Senior Executive Council,
Department of Defense**

HUMAN RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Report FY02-1

- **Task 4: Public School Improvement To
Enhance Quality of Life Around
Military Bases**

December 18, 2002

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HUMAN RESOURCES TASK GROUP REPORT

TASK 4

TASK: Are there successful corporate role models for enhancing the attractiveness of a site or community by improving a local school system?

- DBB HR Leader: W. Norman Johnson
- DoD Liaison: Jane Burke, Principal Director, Military Family and Community Policy

PROCESS: Contacted executives involved with Human Resources Management at IBM; Corning; Chelsea, Massachusetts School Department; several Deans, faculty and financial managers at Boston University.

PERSONS CONTACTED: **Walt Burdick**, Retired Senior Vice President of Human Resources, IBM (enclosure 1); **Brian Lanahan**, Corning; **Irene Cornish**, Superintendent of Schools, Chelsea, Massachusetts; **Doug Sears**, Dean, School of Education, Boston University, and former Superintendent of Schools, Chelsea, Massachusetts; and **Gerald Lewis**, Assistant to Vice President of Financial Affairs, Boston University.

- Described task and asked them to provide information as to their experience with outreach to public schools in their operational area.
- Asked them about the results, problems, etc., and lessons learned from their programs with public schools.
- Reviewed the programs of several education/industry partnerships presented on the World Wide Web. Unfortunately, none focused on the management of an entire school system, but rather on specific areas such as a relationship of school to families, after-school activities, etc. Based on the review, it is apparent that the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership was the sole program to work with all facets of an entire school system, namely: fiscal, personnel, education, transportation, physical plant, parents, etc.
- Examples of partnership/support agencies contacted: FARNET-links to schools/childcare services; University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, Intel, Target and McDonalds--supporting more family

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involvement and empowerment, gave sessions in anger management, and offered after-school activities, e.g., sports, and tutoring.

RESULTS: The Boston University/Chelsea Partnership appears to be the only “full service program,” and the one that has had spectacular “across the board” success.

For example, before the Partnership in 1988-89 only 24 percent of the City of Chelsea’s high school students took the SAT test, and only 1 out of every 5 graduates said that they planned to attend a 4-year college. One in four teenage girls was pregnant or a mother. Fifty-two percent of those who entered high school did not graduate. As one School Committee member put it, “We scored highest in all the areas you want to score low in, and lowest in the areas you want to score high in.”

However, in June of 1998, 10 years after the Partnership was formed, The National Civic League, a nonprofit organization that gives an annual award to 10 cities selected from a nationwide pool, which, that year, included 112 applicants, named Chelsea an “All-America City.” One of the points emphasized to me by the Superintendent of Chelsea Schools was the fact that the city had built 7 new schools in 3 years. In the words of Jerry Choate, CEO and Chairman of the Allstate Insurance Company, and the sponsor of the “All-America City” award event, the award is “like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for cities that set up and successfully address their problems.” In Chelsea, one of those problems had been a chronically underperforming school system.

In December 1991, Joyce Harris of the *Dallas Morning News*, was able to report, “Chelsea’s schools once ranked among Massachusetts’ very worst. Now they are sharply improved under the sweeping BU/Chelsea Schools Education Partnership, perhaps the nation’s boldest attempt to break the cycle of poverty.”

When the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership was proposed to the Chelsea city government there was a fundamental concern on the part of the Chelsea School Committee members over the issue of accountability. Elected officials were being asked to delegate to an outside organization the authority and responsibility initially reposed to them by the city charter. To allay any concern that voters might lose the ability to influence decisions about their school system, the contract between Boston University and the

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City of Chelsea was written so that it could be terminated at any point by a simple majority vote of the School Committee. The Partnership has been in place and reviewed several times since 1989, and it continues to be very successful and a welcome program for Chelsea citizens. In fact, this past year 97 students from cities outside of Chelsea falsely reported Chelsea as their domicile so that they can attend the Chelsea schools.

Background information on the City of Chelsea, the Chelsea Public Schools and a description of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership is enclosed for your information (enclosures 2, 3, and 4).

One of the key elements intrinsic with the success of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership is the involvement of IBM. IBM provides a computer network to link family daycare providers with educational resources outside of their homes and with each other. It is an intrinsic part of the Early Childhood program (enclosure 5). It is commonly accepted that when the parents are involved with the school, and more importantly, the school system that provides education to their children, that the program is usually very successful. The Early Childhood Chelsea/IBM Partnership, not only brings the families in contact with the school system, but also with other parents. The program is an outstanding program to prepare children for entry into the Chelsea School system.

As an example of the progress of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership, a list of the Partnership's goals and the results of the program's attainment over the 1997-1998 school year is enclosed (enclosure 6). It should be noted that even with rising test scores, Chelsea students still rank relatively low in a comparison with other schools throughout the state. Much of this can be attributed to the high turnover among students in any given year, as much as 25 percent of the student body will move into or out of the city. This means that many students have not had the full benefit of reforms to the school system. Nevertheless, a study by U-Mass/Boston that looks at demographic and economic factors ranks Chelsea among the "most effective" school systems in the state.

In closing, from my research of the results of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership on the improvement of the quality of education in the public schools in Chelsea, Massachusetts, I believe that the use of good sound management and the cooperation of the partners namely, IBM, Chelsea Schools and Boston University were necessary for the

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successful implementation and critical to the Chelsea program's initial and continued success. I recommend that this type of partnership should be considered as a program to meet the needs of Task 4.

I base this recommendation on the success of the Partnership as delineated in this report and on my knowledge of successful educational improvement programs and my extensive experience in city and state government predominately dealing with education issues. In this regard, I was appointed Community Relations Commissioner in Jacksonville, Florida, by Mayor Hans Tanzler, and also appointed City Commissioner in Charleston, South Carolina. I was the Founder and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Boston University Residential Charter School in Granby, Massachusetts. I am currently a Trustee at Roxbury Community College, and was a Trustee at the Boston Latin School. I also serve on the USS Constitution's Education Committee. Presently, I am serving as Vice President and Dean of Students at Boston University, the fourth largest private institution of higher education in the country. I accepted the Vice President and Dean of Students appointments upon retiring from the U.S. Navy in 1989, and have remained in these positions for the past 13 years.

Based on the foregoing experiences in leadership and management in education, plus the foregoing reports on the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership, I believe that I am qualified to state that the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership is an effective, noteworthy partnership, and merits being emulated elsewhere in the nation. It is also worthy of noting that because of the recent increasing capabilities and proliferation of distant learning programs it isn't necessary to have all any or all of these partners co-located in one geographical area.

Additionally, as I see it, the partnership does not require the Department of Defense to become involved at the Washington level to bring it to fruition, it can easily be arranged and managed by the on-scene commander of a suitable educational institution, and an education supporting industry such as IBM. In support of this statement, I can cite my successful negotiations with the Commander of Fort Devens, in Ayer, Massachusetts to allow Boston University to conduct two educational camps for inner-city youth on the base. The camps were 2 weeks and 6 weeks in length, and the youth, along with the camp counselors subsisted at Fort Devens.

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The strength of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership is based on the extensive cooperation between Chelsea school staff and Boston University staff. At the heart of the Partnership is the Management Team--a group similar to a school committee with full responsibility for setting policy in the school system. The University is free to draw members from its staff and faculty according to the year-to-year need for specific skill sets. In this way, the Management Team can be highly effective in addressing the evolving needs of the school system.

Very Respectfully,

W. Norman Johnson
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

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Telephone Interview with Mr. Walt Burdick:

In my interview with Mr. Walt Burdick, retired Senior Vice President of Human Resources at IBM, I learned that IBM sends Chelsea School staff and teachers to various IBM training sites for training in their area of employment. Boston University also conducts extensive on and off-site training to the staff and faculty of the Chelsea public schools. In this day and age, training for specific goals very often can be done off-site along with monitoring of the process. For me, based on the annual reports from the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership to the Chelsea Legislature, the Partnership is alive and well, and is meeting the Partnership's 17 goals. As a result, the students of the city of Chelsea's public schools continue to improve yearly. It is noteworthy that this year 97 students were attending the Chelsea public schools claiming they were residents of Chelsea. On request, I will provide copies of the yearly report of the Partnership, which is signed by the Chelsea Superintendent of Schools to the Legislature on request.

Enclosure 1

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Background on the City of Chelsea, Massachusetts:

Chelsea is a small, densely populated city of 1.8 square miles located northeast of Boston across the Mystic River. Median household income is \$24,144. and 24 percent of families live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is 5.3 percent, nearly 40 percent greater than the Massachusetts state average. According to the most recent U.S. Census figures (1990), the city has a total population of 28,710; it is estimated, however, that this figure omits as many as 3,000 unreported immigrants.

Although Chelsea was once a strong, thriving community with a long proud tradition of helping new immigrants become integrated into American society, by the late 1980s, poverty, crime, and corruption had brought the city to the point of fiscal collapse and political paralysis.

Enclosure 2

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Background on Chelsea Public Schools:

Cities throughout America have experienced a period of declining resources as middle-class and other wage earners have moved to the suburbs, taking with them the tax base that funded schools and other government services, and as funds from state and national governments were cut or eliminated. All this was happening while demand for public service was rising. Chelsea, in particular, had been victimized by devastating fires and the construction of a bridge and highway that cut a swath through the heart of the city. At the time of the Boston University study in the late 1980s, Chelsea had little business or industry and maintaining housing stock, all of which resulted in an unusually small tax base. This was further eroded by a declining population. The average annual income in Chelsea was 44 percent below the state average, while the violent crime rate was three times the state average.

The City had grown ever more dependent on state aid. It was not able to keep up with other communities in many areas, including pay scales for teachers. In consequence, teachers with the most promise often left the city for higher paying, and perhaps more rewarding positions in other communities. Those who remained included many with an extraordinary commitment to education and their students. The leadership of the schools also suffered, and the system could not afford the teaching of art, music and other important subjects. The curriculum was in disarray.

Standard measures showed how badly the school system was working. More than 50 percent of the students entering school lacked an adequate background in the English language. In 1988-89, only 24 percent of high school students took the SAT test, and only one out of every five graduates said that they planned to attend a 4-year college. One in four teenage girls was pregnant or a mother. Fifty-two percent of those who entered high school did not graduate. As one School Committee member put it, "We scored highest in all the areas you want to score low in, and lowest in the areas you want to score high in."

Enclosure 3

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Description of Boston University/Chelsea Partnership:

In June of 1989, Boston University began to manage the public schools of Chelsea, Massachusetts, under a unique agreement known as the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership. A university had never previously undertaken the oversight and management of an entire school system. The contract negotiated with the city and approved by the state legislature gave Boston University a mandate to transform the Chelsea Public Schools through June of 1998 (the contract has since been extended through the 2002-03 school year). The Partnership's continuing mission is to rebuild an entire school system and eventually to serve as a model for the reform of urban education. The educational challenges in the city of Chelsea are typical of economically disadvantaged urban areas throughout the United States.

Under the terms of the Partnership, a University-appointed Management Team drawn from senior administrators and faculty members at Boston University establishes policies for the school system, which remains under public control. The elected members of the Chelsea School Committee retain the right to override, by a two-thirds vote, policy decisions concerning education made by the Management Team. In addition, the School Committee may terminate the Partnership at any time by a simple majority vote. Two years before the original contract was due to expire, the School Committee sought an extension of the Partnership. In the spring of 1997, its members voted unanimously to request a 5-year extension of the contract with Boston University. With both the City Council and Boston University in agreement, enabling legislation was enacted by the legislature, and a contract extension signed in July 1997 prolonged the partnership from June of 1998 until June of 2003. The School Committee has once again requested that Boston University consider another 5-year contract extension. (It should be noted that Boston University donates its services, and many additional resources.) The contract merely stipulates the responsibilities and obligations of the University in the city.

Enclosure 4

The Early Childhood Program

A principal goal of the Partnership is to ensure that children be prepared to learn when they attend school. The Early Childhood Program serves pre-school and kindergarten children in a variety of ways which help to prepare them for later schooling. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's education and sign a pledge that they will do so.

The **Pre-school Program**, established in 1989, provides educational day care for three and four year old children every working day of the year from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The children are given an essential educational foundation within a safe, supportive, and intellectually stimulating atmosphere. They gain familiarity with the alphabet, numbers, and groupings; facility with manipulatives; and basic social training. These opportunities prevent them from having to catch up in later years, only to fall farther behind. The program began modestly with only 30 students, and has since expanded to 400. The Early Childhood Program also enrolls kindergarten children, and offers to parents the possibility of day care throughout the year.



The **School/Home Partnership Program** helps parents to teach their children and excite them about learning. Instructors visit homes weekly and recommend educational projects parents and children can engage in together. Each activity is designed to help ensure the child's successful entry into school by helping parents develop their children's skills in language, sorting, classifying, solving problems, and sensory discrimination. English, Spanish, Khmer, and Vietnamese language programs are offered. The children also attend school twice a week in the morning or afternoon. In 1990, the program enrolled 60 families; in 1996, 120 families.

The IBM-sponsored **High Technology Home Daycare Project** uses a computer network to link family day care providers with educational resources outside their homes and with each other. The network supplies up-to-date information to child care providers about a wide variety of subjects, including nutrition and safety, relevant community programs and activities, and educational play activities appropriate for young children. Daycare personnel acquire training in educational methods, child development, and computer literacy.

In 1991, the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership Management Team created an Early Childhood Task Force with representatives from all the public and private early education providers in Chelsea. The goal was to give all pre-schoolers the opportunity to participate in an educational day care program every work day of the year. At present, over 80% of Chelsea pre-schoolers are enrolled in such a program.

1. A computer network linking 12 family childcare providers to all childcare organizations in Chelsea: 3 child care centers, Head Start, the community hospital, and the University's School of Education -- to share information and training.
2. Early Childhood Education training for college credit or continuing education credit open to all childcare workers and parents in Chelsea.
3. Computer training and home visits by the Project Director to the 12 family childcare providers in the Project.

Family daycare is the most popular form of childcare in the United States; four times as many children are cared for in family daycare homes than in childcare centers. Yet, until recently, neither public nor the private sector tried to improve the educational component of family daycare.

In 1991, Associate Dean Dr. Carole Greenes of the Boston University School of Education and Kathleen Kilgore, a writer and former childcare administrator, started the Home Learning Centers Project (with funds and equipment from IBM) to expand the Chelsea Early Learning Program and to keep good providers working in childcare. Before the network, many family daycare providers left the profession due to isolation and lack of support. Project Director Laura DiChiappari a former Head Start teacher with a background in teaching and computers, administers the program with the help of a community board of advisors.

Experts warned that the providers would ignore the computers, but, instead, they loved them. "It's like a new member of the family," one provider said. The Home Learning Centers Project outgrew its first network, and moved to the Boston University branch of Internet. Now 12 providers (caring for 2 children) and staff at the centers can "talk," share childcare information, arrange field trips, get information from the health center and the School of Education. When not using them for the Project, the providers are free to use the computers in any way they wish. The Home Learning Project has organized field trips children's art exhibits, park clean-ups, and other community activities. Both English and Spanish are used on the network (Chelsea has a large Latino population), and the Project has also sponsored English language classes.

The Home Learning Centers Project also ties in with the School/Home Partnership Project a project that provides parents with books and activities in English, Spanish, Khmer, and Vietnamese, and with public school kindergarten classes.

Through the Home Learning Centers Project, preschool children in

Chelsea receive the same high quality early childhood education they would in a good center-based preschool program for a fraction of the cost. For less than \$1,000 per year (plus equipment costs), the Project is reaching 72 children directly plus training staff from all Chelsea Childcare centers -- all without building a new classroom or hiring a new teacher. We hope this project will be copied by other schools and childcare agencies. Eventually, they could create a national, even international, Early Childhood Education and Childcare network.

The Home Learning Centers project is part of the overall Boston University/Chelsea Partnership, a 10 year program under which Boston University manages the public school system of the nearby city of Chelsea - the poorest municipality in Massachusetts. The Chelsea Partnership is now in its third year.

For additional information contact:

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GOALS AND RESULTS

Three fundamental educational principles lie at the heart of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership: children must be ready to learn, teachers must be ready to teach, and a serious, substantive curriculum must be taught. These three principles underlie virtually all of the reform efforts in Chelsea. In addition, the 1989 enabling legislation identified seventeen long-term goals for the Partnership. These goals correspond to the major problems first identified by Boston University and constitute standards by which progress can be measured from year to year. This report tracks the Partnership's progress over the 1997-98 school year in working towards these established goals.

1. Revitalize the curriculum of the city's school system.

Curricular reform is central to the mission of restoring a sense of direction and coherence to any deficient school system. It is also an ongoing process which requires that teachers and administrators possess and exercise the judgment necessary to distinguish between worthwhile initiatives and programs and those which, when implemented for the sake of innovation alone, often prove to be misleading and counter-productive.

Throughout the school year, the structure and content of the curriculum at all grade levels continued to be thoroughly and exhaustively evaluated by specially appointed disciplinary curriculum committees consisting of principals, lead teachers, and regular classroom teachers. Members of the faculty at Boston University and other recognized experts from outside the district were consulted on a regular basis. Particular attention was paid to the alignment of the curriculum with the Massachusetts Board of Education's Curriculum Frameworks.

Curriculum work in 1997-98 focused upon revamping the two-hour literacy instructional block, a concentrated period in the elementary (grades 1-3) school day devoted explicitly to teaching reading and basic literacy skills. Selected students were pulled from the classroom during the two-hour block and received instruction from a Title I teacher. This adaptation allowed classroom teachers to give those students who remained in the classroom more individualized attention. The importance of phonetics in acquiring basic reading skills was further emphasized in grades 1 and 2 with the adoption of the Benchmark phonics program.

First graders at the Kelly Elementary School have just completed the first year of a two-way Spanish/English bilingual program. There was exceptionally strong parental interest and involvement in the program, which will be expanded

in the fall of 1998 to include a kindergarten class at the Early Learning Center and classes in both 1st and 2nd grades at the Kelly School.

Planning also took place this year for a new Transitional Bilingual Education policy that will be implemented in 1998-99. In the past, Chelsea followed the pattern found in most Massachusetts districts and did not count TBE kindergarten as year one of the required three-year TBE sequence. Starting in September of 1998, all Chelsea students in a TBE kindergarten will be considered to be in their first year of a TBE program. It is hoped that this will both elevate standards and expectations of literacy in kindergarten and accelerate the passage of students into English-only classes in the early grades. Students whose English proficiency remains too limited for the English-only classroom after three years will receive English-only sheltered instruction in order to bring their skills to the required level of proficiency. Sheltered instruction consists of English-only lessons in all subjects, with additional, intense emphasis on the development of English vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. In most cases, students do not need to spend more than a year in sheltered English instruction before moving into mainstream English classes.

Programs in music and the visual arts were strengthened and expanded at all schools with additional funds from a \$2 million Challenge Grant offered by the Annenberg Foundation.

At Chelsea High School, Advanced Placement courses were added in the areas of European History and Biology, bringing the total number of AP courses available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors to six. An encouraging indicator of progress at Chelsea High School was that enrollment in AP classes more than doubled, from 42 students in 1996-97 to 92 students in 1997-98.

In addition, a program of accelerated academic courses known as "Challenge" courses continued to be offered to students at the high school seeking to become qualified to do AP work. Many of the students enrolled in Challenge courses during the school year also choose to enroll in the "Great Expectations" and "Champs" summer programs for students seeking greater academic challenge.

A new cluster of Challenge courses was introduced this year at the 7th and 8th grade levels. Planning is currently under way for a 4th grade mathematics Challenge program for the fall of 1998. The Challenge sequence will move into the 5th and 6th grades in the course of the 1999-2000 school year.

2. Establish programs for the professional development of school personnel and for the expansion of learning opportunities for parents.

If teachers are to be ready to teach, they must be thoroughly competent in their subjects. The Partnership has assisted the Chelsea Public Schools in developing a comprehensive professional development program that includes summer institutes, financial support for part-time study at local universities, and after-school institutes. In addition, Boston University offers twelve scholarships each semester, including the summer, for coursework at the University—a total of 36 courses offered free of tuition to Chelsea teachers each year. In 1997-98 the dollar value of these scholarships amounted to \$44, 938.

A major component of professional development is the district's tuition reimbursement program. Teachers may apply for one-half the tuition of any course or program from an accredited institution, provided the course or program relates to the teacher's assignment. Teachers may attend, and receive partial reimbursement for, up to three courses each year under this provision. In 1997-98, the school department paid over \$79,000 from the operating budget for 211 stipends that allowed 75 teachers and supporting staff to enroll in such courses.

Altogether, the district expended more than \$750,000 to support professional development during the 1997-98 school year. The Annenberg Matching Grant provided \$332,738 to support programming efforts. From federal grants the district received \$28,018; state grants totaled \$23,094. The largest amount—\$399,640—derived from the general operating fund. These combined funds allowed the district to exceed the state-mandated benchmark of \$75 per student for professional development by more than \$66.

During the course of the school year, the district's transitional bilingual education office offered training to all classroom teachers in techniques for teaching students who have learned or are learning English as a second language. Because 70 percent of Chelsea's students report a primary home language other than English, it is essential that all teachers be given opportunities that will allow them to understand better and respond more appropriately to the particular needs of these students.

Complementing this focus, workshops initiated last year to familiarize teachers with the cultures of Chelsea's many and varied immigrant groups have proven useful. With members of the immigrant communities volunteering to instruct and illuminate teachers and supporting staff about their customs and heritage, the workshops also served to underscore the Partnership's commitment to involving the entire community in the education of its children.

Finally, 20 outstanding Chelsea teachers were identified and rewarded through the system of peer review incentive merit awards, now in its second year of implementation. Teachers who have been in the Chelsea school system five years or more may submit their credentials for review by merit review committees. Members of the peer review committees, some of whom are appointed by the teachers' union and others by the school department's administration, review credentials, visit classes, and make recommendations to the Superintendent about which candidates deserve merit status. The Superintendent makes the final determination. Teachers granted merit status receive a salary bonus for the next three years, provided they maintain high annual evaluations.

3. Improve test scores for students in the school system.

With the first implementation of the new statewide MCAS examinations mandated by the Education Reform Act this year, use of the 10th grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills was discontinued at the state level. In Chelsea, however, high school juniors who either were not recorded as having taken the test in the 10th grade, or who had taken it but scored in the bottom third nationally, were required by the district to retake the test and pass in order to attain senior year status.

Of the 78 students who took the Iowa 10th grade test again this year, 55 percent had composite scores at or above the 33rd percentile and subsequently passed. There was also substantial improvement in the "high end" scores in specific subject areas, particularly social studies and science. Eighteen percent scored at or above the 90th percentile in social studies and 6.4 percent scored at the 99th percentile. In science, 11.5 percent scored at or above the 90th percentile and 6.4 percent scored at the 99th percentile.

Advanced Placement courses allow high school students to do college-level work and gain college credits by taking a national AP exam. These exams are graded on a scale of 1 to 5, and most colleges will award credit for a score of 3 or better. On the 42 exams administered to Chelsea High School students in four subjects in 1997, eight scores of 3 or better were achieved. In 1998, 91 exams were administered in six different subjects, and 17 scores of 3 or better were recorded. The progression of average scores of all AP exams taken shows the continuing growth of the program: 1.62 in 1996 to 1.81 by 1998.

CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL ADVANCED PLACEMENT

| SUBJECT | # of tests taken | | | average score | | |
|------------------|------------------|------|------|---------------|------|------|
| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| US History | 13 | 20 | 23 | 1.62 | 1.55 | 1.91 |
| Chemistry | -- | 4 | 16 | -- | 1.0 | 1.44 |
| English Lit/Comp | -- | 11 | 19 | -- | 1.55 | 1.68 |
| Calculus (AB) | -- | 7 | 11 | -- | 2.86 | 2.55 |
| Biology | -- | -- | 8 | -- | -- | 1.63 |
| European History | -- | -- | 14 | -- | -- | 1.64 |
| TOTALS | 13 | 42 | 91 | 1.62 | 1.71 | 1.81 |

| SUBJECT | # scores of 3 | | | # scores of 4 | | |
|------------------|---------------|------|------|---------------|------|------|
| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| US History | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Chemistry | -- | 0 | 1 | -- | 0 | 0 |
| English Lit/Comp | -- | 2 | 2 | -- | 0 | 0 |
| Calculus AB | -- | 3 | 3 | -- | 2 | 3 |
| Biology | -- | -- | 1 | -- | -- | 0 |
| European History | -- | -- | 3 | -- | -- | 1 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 8 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 5 |

In 1997-98, Chelsea High School recorded the highest number of its students taking the SAT examinations in the past decade. Forty-eight percent of high school seniors enrolled in 1998 took the SATs. The average score rose 30 points from the previous year, from 772 to 802. This year, 13 students (17.6 percent) scored above 1000—a great improvement from last year, in which only three students (five percent) scored above 1000.

SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

| Year | Senior Class Size | Number Taking Test | Percent Taking Test | Average Math Scores | Average Verbal Scores | Combined Average Score |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1988-89 | 156 | 38 | 24% | 369 | 295 | 664 |
| 1989-90 | 181 | 53 | 29% | 388 | 304 | 692 |
| 1990-91 | 175 | 53 | 30% | 380 | 318 | 698 |
| 1991-92 | 143 | 53 | 37% | 356 | 264 | 620 |
| 1992-93 | 171 | 73 | 43% | 347 | 287 | 634 |
| 1993-94 | 119 | 61 | 51% | 360 | 278 | 638 |
| 1994-95* | 135 | 53 | 39% | 401 | 326 | 727 |
| 1995-96* | 165 | 66 | 40% | 396 | 358 | 754 |
| 1996-97* | 175 | 59 | 34% | 414 | 358 | 772 |
| 1997-98* | 153 | 74 | 48% | 420 | 382 | 802 |

*Note: Beginning in the academic year 1994-95, the College Board “recentered” the SAT scores. As a result, combined SAT scores will read approximately 100 points higher from 1994-95 onwards than they would have had the scores not been recentered. Due to an unfortunate error, the 1996-97 senior SAT scores were inaccurately reported last year. The corrected scores are reported above.

The Chelsea Public Schools continued to administer a range of assessment tools at the elementary school level, including the 3rd grade Iowa Test of Reading and Chelsea’s own program of individual performance assessments in literacy and mathematics for children in grades 1 through 8. This year, 4th, 8th and 10th graders also took the newly designed MCAS tests as required under the provisions of the Education Reform Act. Those results were not available at the time this report was prepared.

Of the 396 third-graders who took the Iowa Test of Reading this year, 3.5 percent scored at the “Advanced” level, just about double of last year’s 1.81 percent. The number of students scoring at the lowest, or “pre-reader” level, also improved, dropping from 24.1 percent last year to 19.7 percent this year. In total, the number of children classified as either Advanced, Proficient, or Basic readers went up 4.4 percent over last year’s scores. The percentage of 3rd graders tested also went up, from 73.3 percent in 1997 to 78.4 percent in 1998, an indication that

the school system is moving a greater number of children into regular English-only classes.

Overall, tests in reading comprehension showed marked improvement over last year's scores, although poor results in the vocabulary section of the test caused the overall scores to drop down to a disappointing 28th national percentile. In spelling, Chelsea third graders were just below the 50th national percentile. The substantial improvement in spelling may be attributed to an emphasis on phonetics. Unfortunately, the overall scores of Chelsea's students suffered because vocabulary scores figure heavily in computing the overall score, whereas spelling results are not included. The progress made in reading comprehension and spelling was promising, but it is clear that in order to raise overall scores, vocabulary-building skills must be given greater emphasis, particularly if children are not learning new English words at home.

Half of the children who scored at the "Advanced" level spoke a first language other than English, and none of them had been enrolled in transitional bilingual education. Of the 31 percent of students who scored at the "Proficient" level (almost identical to last year's score of 31.33 percent), 27 percent were not native English speakers. In total, 44 percent of native English speakers scored at the Advanced and Proficient levels, as opposed to 30 percent of non-native English speakers. At the time they took the test, 76 percent of the non-native English speaking students were not enrolled in transitional bilingual education classes.

3RD GRADE IOWA LITERACY TESTS

| CATEGORY | 1997 # | 1998 # | 1997 % | 1998 % |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Registered 3rd Graders | 455 | 505 | | |
| 3rd Graders Tested | 332 | 396 | 73.3% | 78.4% |
| Advanced Readers | 6 | 14 | 1.8% | 3.5% |
| Proficient Readers | 104 | 128 | 31.3% | 32.3% |
| Basic Readers | 142 | 176 | 42.8% | 44.4% |
| Pre-Readers | 80 | 78 | 24.1% | 19.7% |
| Combined Adv, Pro, Basic | 252 | 318 | 75.9% | 80.3% |

3RD GRADE IOWA LITERACY TESTS

(Note: state reports exclude special needs students tested with accommodations; hence, not all 396 students tested are reported in the following data.)

| Statistic | Vocabulary | | Reading Comp. | | Reading Total | | Spelling | |
|---|------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Year | 1997 | 1998 | 1997 | 1998 | 1997 | 1998 | 1997 | 1998 |
| Number of Students | 291 | 364 | 291 | 364 | 290 | 364 | 292 | 364 |
| Standard Score | 172.3 | 168.5 | 175.3 | 176.8 | 173.8 | 172.6 | 180.0 | 184.2 |
| National Stanine | 3.9 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| National Curve Equivalent | 38.0 | 34.5 | 40.1 | 41.3 | 38.1 | 36.9 | 44.5 | 48.7 |
| Percentile Rank: Average Student Norms against National | 29 | 23 | 33 | 35 | 30 | 28 | 41 | 48 |

Analysis of the Iowa test data has shown that vocabulary is an area that needs to be addressed and improved with all limited-English proficient (LEP) students; while many of them performed reasonably well in reading comprehension and spelling, they fared poorly in the ability to define words correctly. Third graders who scored at the "Advanced" Level showed a striking range in the percentile rankings they achieved in the "Vocabulary" category: while the best student ranked in the 94th percentile, one student ranked as low as the 25th percentile in vocabulary – and still managed to achieve an overall score in the "Advanced" range.

Approximately 70 percent of Chelsea's students hear and speak little or no English in their homes. Although this means they are building vocabulary in two languages, the very fact of doing so limits the speed with which they can expand their vocabulary in either language.

In addition to the Iowa tests and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, the district has developed internal assessment programs in literacy and mathematics to use as diagnostic tools and to provide continuous information about the implementation of curricula and teaching in kindergarten through grade 8. In literacy, for example, each early elementary student must read aloud a grade-level passage which he or she has never seen. Depending upon the number of errors made and in accord with strict instruction about any assistance the assessor may give, students receive a rating in reading fluency. At all grade levels, students must also provide a summary of the passage they read: orally in grades 1 and 2, written in the upper grades. The summary must contain certain elements detailed in rubrics for each grade level, and, depending upon the assistance the student requires to meet the standard for that grade level, the

assessor determines the conditions under which a student is able to meet the standard. In consequence of the results of the standardized Iowa and MCAS tests, standards are reviewed and adjusted so that the internal district assessments are reasonably accurate predictors of student success on the state-administered tests. For example, at the end of 1997, 76 percent of Chelsea's 3rd graders were able to read a new grade-level passage with no help or minimal help, approximately equivalent to the 80.3 percent of 3rd graders who scored at the Advanced, Proficient, or Basic levels in the Iowa tests of April 1998.

The performance assessments in mathematics have been moved to September of the school year in order to provide greater diagnostic direction to the mathematics program. These assessments will also be refined in accord with the MCAS results.

Three years ago the Partnership contracted with Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to conduct jointly a comprehensive assessment of the Early Childhood Program that includes longitudinal studies of children who entered the pre-kindergarten classes in Chelsea. The complete analysis of the data from this assessment should be ready by the end of the 1998 calendar year. Results from the assessment will be included in next year's edition of this report.

4. Decrease the dropout rate for students in the school system.

In accord with reporting procedures established by the Massachusetts Department of Education, a dropout is a student who "was enrolled at the end of the school year, did not return to school after summer vacation, and was not enrolled at any time during the school year, or was enrolled sometime during the school year and was not enrolled on the last day of the current school year; and does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program; or transferred to another public school, non public school, other district-approved program, or other state-approved program; or temporary absence due to suspension or verified illness; or death."

In the past two years in Chelsea much effort has gone into developing and improving a consistent and accurate student database. As a result the district has achieved greater systemic reliability and improved tracking of individual students. District administrators have also reviewed methodologies for calculating and reporting and made alterations as necessary. In previous years, Chelsea's calculated dropout rate did not record those students who had been disenrolled due to excessive absence. In the view of the high school administration, this method does not provide an adequate picture. Beginning this year, the district consequently reports a dropout rate that reflects this information. According to

this new and more precise method, which the administration also believes to be more consistent with the Department of Education guidelines, the Chelsea High School dropout rate for the 1997-98 academic year is 16.3 percent. Were this rate to be calculated according to the method used in previous years (i.e. without accounting for students disenrolled due to excessive absence), the Chelsea High School dropout rate would be 6.4 percent, reflecting a consistent downward trend. According to this methodology the Chelsea High School dropout rate has decreased from 1989-90 from a rate of 20 percent to this year's 6.4 percent. It is important to note that the raw numbers from which these figures are derived have become significantly more accurate in the past three years due to improved database accuracy.

5. Increase the average daily student attendance rate for the school system.

Because of major concerns that school attendance at all sites was well below the minimum levels required for effective learning to take place, a comprehensive set of initiatives was implemented in 1997-98 to improve daily attendance rates. These were supported by the development of credible accounting and statistical databanks. Attendance at every school site improved *markedly* this year.

With funds from the Annenberg Challenge Grant, every child in Grades 1-3 who had perfect attendance in any one quarter was given a hard-back book with a bookplate bearing his or her name. Some 35 children who had perfect attendance for the entire year received a children's dictionary. In the upper grades, policies and clear sanctions were put into place.

ATTENDANCE RATES

| LOCATION | 1996-1997 | 1997-1998 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Chelsea School District Overall | 88.6% | 91.7% |
| Early Learning Center | 84.6% | 90.4% |
| Mary C. Burke Elementary Complex | 92.6% | 94.6% |
| Williams Middle Schools | 89.4% | 91.8% |
| Chelsea High School | 79.9% | 86.6% |

6. Increase the number of high school graduates from the school system.

Of the 153 seniors enrolled at Chelsea High School at the conclusion of the 1997-98 school year, 124 graduated in June and 19 were awarded their diplomas in August after attending summer school, in which they were to complete necessary remedial work.

CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

| Year | Number of Graduating Students |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1989 | 133 |
| 1990 | 175 |
| 1991 | 156 |
| 1992 | 143 |
| 1993 | 171 |
| 1994 | 119 |
| 1995 | 142 |
| 1996 | 140 |
| 1997 | 140 |
| 1998 | 143 |

In addition, the Pathways Program continued to provide a challenging and relevant curriculum for students between the ages of 16 and 22 whose needs are not met by the traditional high school program. This alternative program gives students the opportunity to work toward a Chelsea High School diploma and prepares them for both higher education and the workforce. This year, 34 students were enrolled in the Pathways Program.

7. Increase the number of high school graduates from the school system who go on to attend four-year colleges.

Of the 124 seniors who graduated in June this year, 74 percent had plans to attend either private or public institutions of higher education, an increase of 13 percent over last year's graduating class. Information about the plans of the August graduates is incomplete and therefore not included in the following charts.

PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATING CLASS AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS GOING ON TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

| Year | Percent of Class | # to 4-Year College | # to 2-Year College | # to Other Post-Secondary |
|------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1989 | 52.6% | 28 | 35 | 7 |
| 1990 | 53.1% | 40 | 35 | 18 |
| 1991 | 60.9% | 46 | 30 | 19 |
| 1992 | 60.1% | 35 | 43 | 8 |
| 1993 | 66.7% | 53 | 44 | 17 |
| 1994 | 72.3% | 41 | 39 | 6 |
| 1995 | 73.9% | 41 | 47 | 17 |
| 1996 | 77.1% | 37 | 57 | 14 |
| 1997 | 61.4% | 35 | 45 | 6 |
| 1998 | 74.2% | 40 | 46 | 6 |

8. Increase the number of job placements for graduates of the school system.

Twenty percent of the 124 seniors graduating in June were planning to go straight into the workforce, and five percent had plans to join the military. These figures need to be reviewed in the context of Goal 7. As the number of graduating seniors going to post-secondary education increases, the percentage of graduating seniors who might seek work immediately following high school will decrease. Thus, the most important measure for this goal is the number of seniors listed under "Other or Not Available." This figure, representing less than one percent of the senior class this year, shows that most seniors leave Chelsea High School with plans for their futures and a sense of direction for their lives.

JOB PLACEMENTS FOR GRADUATES OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

| Year | Work (#) | Military (#) | # of "Other or Not Available" |
|------|----------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1989 | 36 | 6 | 21 |
| 1990 | 38 | 1 | 43 |
| 1991 | 41 | 9 | 11 |
| 1992 | 34 | 8 | 15 |
| 1993 | 46 | 4 | 7 |
| 1994 | 22 | 4 | 7 |
| 1995 | 26 | 7 | 4 |
| 1996 | 26 | 4 | 2 |
| 1997 | 30 | 5 | 19 |
| 1998 | 25 | 6 | 1 |

9. Develop a community school program through which before-school, after-school, and summer programs are offered to students in the school system and through which adult education classes for inhabitants of the city are offered.

A number of new initiatives were added to the before- and after-school programs, renamed Project Excellence, and granted status as an independent school under an experienced principal. Classes are held throughout the district's buildings and provide both remediation and enrichment opportunities for students. In total, some 2,000 students were served during the school year by programs and courses offered under the program.

Through collaboration with Boston University's Project BUILD, tutors from the University helped in the intensive elementary level literacy program designed to improve the reading of children in the first three grades. An after-school literacy intervention program was also developed and implemented to accelerate student acquisition of essential reading skills, including those assessed by the standardized Iowa tests. Approximately 200 students enrolled in and attended that program.

At Chelsea High School, special courses were introduced by Project Excellence this year to prepare students for the SAT examinations. Taught by two faculty members, they have also been a means to instruct students about the need to take such tests seriously. After-school courses were taught by faculty members this year in all the academic subjects. In addition, a special after-school course was offered to prepare students who were retaking or taking for the first time the 10th grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills, although use of that assessment instrument will now be discontinued. Similar courses were also offered for the PSAT and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) examinations.

For a number of reasons, enrollment in the summer program at Chelsea High School has nearly tripled since last year. Students have embraced what is known as enrichment programming, which affords them opportunities to improve their skills and prepare for Challenge courses and AP courses during the regular school year. Students who failed courses during the academic year are motivated to take summer courses because their promotion to the next grade has been made contingent upon successful completion of remedial summer work. At both ends of the spectrum of academic achievement, students are being given ample opportunities. The faculty and staff of Chelsea High School have strongly encouraged all students to take advantage of those opportunities.

Another program continued this year under the auspices of Project Excellence was Spanish for Spanish Speakers, designed to improve literacy and

grammatical skills among students whose home language is Spanish. The courses are being offered at all grade levels.

In February, the Chelsea Housing Authority opened the Innes Learning Center for area residents at the Innes Apartments on Watts Street. Having been asked by the Housing Authority to provide the educational component for the new center, the Chelsea Public Schools expanded Project Excellence to include an afterschool program at the site for children in grades 3 through 6. Open Mondays through Thursdays from 3:00 until 4:30pm, the Center provides instruction in English literacy, math, and computer skills to supplement classroom instruction.

Now in its ninth year, the Intergenerational Literacy Project seeks to accomplish the overall goal of supporting families as they work with their children in the home, both to reinforce existing home literacy activities and to attain the instructional objectives of the schools. The project offers English literacy classes to immigrant parents so that they can improve their own prospects and more fully support the education of their children in American schools. Over the course of the 1997-98 school year, the project served 161 adults and 311 children.

In August of 1997, the program moved to the newly renovated Early Learning Center. The new facility provides the ILP with adult and childcare classroom space, a program library, a computer library, and an office. Funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education purchased additional equipment for the ILP computer lab.

Adult participants in the program are given reading instruction and a selection of children's books, which they are encouraged to take home and read with their children. Classes are held during both morning and evening hours to accommodate people with demanding schedules, and free childcare is provided for children of participating families. This year, a 10-week summer evening class is being added for the first time with funding from the USF&G Foundation. The ILP remains heavily oversubscribed and regularly has a waiting list of over 100 families.

10. Identify and encourage the utilization of community resources.

Through the community schools initiative, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Boston run a variety of programs in the schools. The Chelsea Police Department sponsors a youth league athletic program in the middle schools, and many community organizations and teams use school facilities after school hours.

The Chelsea Public Schools continue to maintain strong partnerships with the Chelsea Police and Fire Departments, collaborating with the former on drug and gang prevention initiatives and with the latter on fire prevention and safety

programs. Representatives of the Police Department and the Public Schools meet once a month, and the community policing program maintains daily liaisons with all of the schools. All 9th grade students take a CPR course given in cooperation with the Chelsea Fire Department and Whidden Memorial Hospital. That collaboration has also been responsible for the implementation of the Cardiac Survival Project, which instructs students about nutrition, exercise, and safety.

Representatives of Massachusetts General Hospital serve on the school department's Health and Human Services Committee. The Partnership is also a member of the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative and participates in its programs. The staff of ROCA (Reach Out to Chelsea Adolescents) and school personnel share space for their programs and consult on new and existing initiatives.

11. Establish programs that link the home to the school system.

Parents and other citizens of Chelsea are also valuable resources. To encourage community involvement in the schools, the Partnership established a quarterly newsletter, *Our Schools*, which is distributed to every household in Chelsea. It is published in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Bosnian, Somali, and Haitian-Creole. The Partnership has also encouraged parents to participate in the Chelsea Education Advisory Council, which solicits input and advice on policy and administrative matters ranging from attendance to bus routes. The monthly meetings of the Management Team, the policy-making body for the Partnership, as well as the School Committee, provide regular opportunities for members of the community to express their views in public forums and are broadcast on the Chelsea cable channel. The practice of providing a time for public comment at these meetings was introduced by Boston University.

Specific initiatives have also sought parental and family involvement in the schools. For example, Chelsea High School Principal Lincoln Tamayo appeared on local access cable television and placed ads in the *Chelsea Record* urging parents to attend the first Open House of the school year in October. He also organized a free shuttle bus service from Bellingham Square to the High School to ensure that as many parents as possible would be able to attend. A record number of parents, nearly 400, turned out for the school's first Open House.

12. Decrease teacher absenteeism in the school system.

Throughout the Partnership, teacher absenteeism has not been a major administrative problem; by and large, Chelsea's teachers are a dedicated group of professionals who take the trust of educating children seriously. At the same time, variances in attendance rates at any single school site may be indicative of issues or problems that principals and central administrators must address. It is worth

noting that the best attendance rate occurred during the 1997-98 school year; we believe that it is due in part to the increased accountability through assessment for student performance. The chart below traces the average daily district-wide teacher attendance rate, from the beginning of the Partnership to the present.

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE FOR TEACHERS

| Year | 89-90 | 90-91 | 91-92 | 92-93 | 93-94 | 94-95 | 95-96 | 96-97 | 97-98 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| % | 95.47 | 95.78 | 93.81 | 94.86 | 94.78 | 96.07 | 96.25 | 95.61 | 96.85 |

13. Improve the financial management of the school system and expand the range of operating funds available to the school system.

The Partnership has always sought to strengthen and expand the financial resources of the Chelsea schools by seeking to identify and draw upon a variety of sources for funds beyond those provided by the City and the Commonwealth. The 1997-98 school district budget drawn from local and state monies was \$32,452,364, an increase of 18 percent over the previous year's budget, and an increase of 181 percent over 1989's corresponding budget of \$11, 546, 095. In addition to the local and state aid, another \$3,762,301 was provided from grant sources, bringing the total from all sources to \$36,203,665 for the 1997-98 school year. The total amount of funding from all sources during the 1989-90 school year was \$17,040,307. This reflects an increase in budget from all sources from 1989-90 to 1997-98 of 112 percent.

The increase in funds allowed for:

- the implementation of the negotiated contracts with all union personnel;
- an increase in the per-pupil allocations to each school for textbooks and supplies;
- the addition of 37 staff positions (1 administrator, 24 teachers, 12 support staff) to open the new Shurtleff Early Learning center and to keep up with increased enrollment;
- an increase in funds to purchase library books (\$98,000) and computers (\$50,000).

As has been the case in every year of the Partnership, the school district carefully maintained a balanced budget and concluded the fiscal year in line with budget projections.

A Different September Foundation was formally established in 1991 by Boston University to solicit grants and gifts for the Chelsea schools from a variety of sources. In FY98, A Different September Foundation raised \$1,345,495 from corporations, foundations, individuals, and other sources, as compared to \$989,906

in FY97. Among those funds was a \$404,000 Massachusetts Department of Education grant secured by ADSF which was awarded directly to the Chelsea Schools. In addition, Boston University continues to provide professional and administrative services; to date, these in-kind contributions have totaled approximately \$8,830,000.

14. Increase salaries and benefits for all staff, including raising the teacher salary average to make it competitive with the statewide average.

With the exception of its administrators, all employees of the Chelsea Public Schools will be in the final year of collective bargaining agreements in the 1998-99 academic year. Teachers are entering the final year of a contract negotiated with the Chelsea Teachers' Union which awarded them a 3 percent yearly increase as well as the new merit awards for outstanding teaching. Teacher salaries have increased by 35 percent since the inception of the Partnership. Furthermore, teachers receive as a benefit half the tuition for approved coursework and are eligible to compete for twelve Boston University full-tuition scholarships offered each semester.

In the fall of 1997, a three-year contract was signed with the Chelsea Administrators Association, which represents academic administrators, including Directors, Assistant Principals, and Coordinators. That agreement will expire in June of 2000. It calls for a 3 percent salary increase per year of the contract and also provides for modest increases in the annual sick leave buy back (reward for excellent attendance) and the career sick leave buy back (severance). Those provisions are now on a par with the equivalent benefits provided to teachers.

During the summer of 1997, individual one-year contracts were negotiated with all principals. Those contracts were renegotiated in the spring of 1998, and new one-year contracts were signed. In addition, the position of Assistant Principal at the High School was upgraded to the same grade and salary level as Directors, and the position's work year increased from 205 to 220 days, a change that gives the high school a more sustained and appropriate level of leadership.

15. Construct effective recruiting, hiring and retention policies for all staff members.

From its inception, the Partnership has sought to make staffing at all levels of the Chelsea Public Schools reflect a renewed commitment to quality and professionalism. Careful hiring and training procedures have been put in place by a central administration that has made it a priority to be both aware of and responsive to the changing needs of its schools.

In addition to being provided with uniforms, custodial employees are now routinely given longer, more intensive training to prepare them for the complexities of managing the school department's modern buildings.

In recruiting teachers, the school department has made effective use of the Department of Education's waiver program as well as the alternative certification option available under the Education Reform Act. The alternative certification provision made it possible to hire Lincoln Tamayo, former assistant to Chancellor John Silber of Boston University and a lawyer by education, to serve as Principal of Chelsea High School. His success in one year in raising expectations, standards of civility, and levels of achievement at Chelsea High School confirms that effective hiring procedures should not focus singly on narrow credential requirements but rather on finding people with the abilities and character to serve the needs of schools and students.

16. Establish student assessment designs and procedures that are of assistance in monitoring programs and that act as incentives for staff members in each school.

A comprehensive program of assessments has been in place and operating well for the past five years. Its foundation is a set of assessments in literacy and mathematics that is administered annually to all students in kindergarten through grade 8. With the implementation of the state's new MCAS examinations in grades 4, 8 and 10, the Partnership will now be reviewing the district's own assessment program to ensure it both complements and is an accurate predictor of state results.

Equally important to the monitoring of student progress has been the establishment of a reliable, up-to-date data base managed by an administration that is committed to handling data accurately. Record-keeping practices have been completely overhauled and, in some cases, built from the ground up. Priority has been given to hiring sound administrators and implementing credible systems that can be relied upon to produce diagnostically useful statistics.

17. Seek to expand and modernize facilities in the school system.

Early childhood education has been the cornerstone of the Partnership's efforts in Chelsea. The opening of the Shurtleff Early Learning Center was a particularly significant event in the history of the Partnership. Although financial constraints had jeopardized completion of renovations to the former elementary school building, an anonymous donation of \$750,000 to A Different September Foundation was received for the explicit purpose of funding 10 early childhood

education classrooms over a 10-year period. That generous gift made it possible to complete the work on schedule, and more than 1,000 children began attending school there in September. The opening of the Shurtleff School marked the completion of the \$115,000,000 school building project initiated by Boston University with a planning grant that allowed for the replacement or renovation of every building in the entire school system.